

REMARKS

Claims 24 – 41, 75 – 90 and 121 – 141 are pending. The Examiner's confirmation of the allowability of such claims is appreciated so that the case can proceed to allowance.

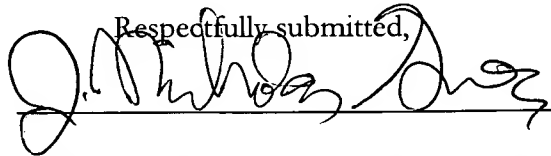
As concerns ¶ 3 of the Office Action: the specification has been amended to delete the reference to the embedded hyperlink.

With respect to ¶ 2 of the Office Action: Applicants note that actual copies of any and all non-patent documents were already provided in the parent file history, i.e., serial no. 09/173,853 filed October 16, 1998, now U.S. Patent No. 6,313,833. This fact was indicated expressly in the IDS from November 30, 2001 – resubmitted herewith – in paragraph 3. As such, Applicants have complied fully with 37 C.F.R. 1.98 which states:

....(d) A copy of any patent, publication or other information listed in an information disclosure statement is not required to be provided if it was previously cited by or submitted to the Office in a prior application, provided that the prior application is properly identified in the statement and relied upon for an earlier filing date under 35 U.S.C. 120. (emphasis added)

Thus, Applicants are not aware of any obligation to provide copies because such were provided in accordance with the rules and are already readily available to the Examiner. These references, moreover, are merely background information and are not considered by Applicant to be material to the present claims. Nonetheless because Applicants would appreciate the Examiner promptly reviewing such references to confirm that they present no issue in fact concerning the patentability of the present claims, Applicants have submitted the references again. No fees are believed to be due at this time.

Should the Examiner have any questions, please feel free to contact the undersigned at any convenient time.

Respectfully submitted,


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I hereby certify that the foregoing is being deposited with the U.S. Postal Service, postage prepaid, to the Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks, this 26th day of January 2005.